

# 110 Coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions are words that link words, phrases, or clauses of equal importance. There are special rules for using commas with coordinating conjunctions.

See also:

Defining relative clauses 81

Ellipsis 89

## 110.1 USING "AND" TO JOIN SENTENCES

"And" is used to join two sentences together in order to avoid repeating words that appear in both, and to link ideas.

There's a library. There's a restaurant.

There's a library **and** a restaurant.

"There's" is the same as "There is."

The second "there's" can be dropped when joining sentences using "and."



## FURTHER EXAMPLES



Jazmin's sister lives **and** works in Paris.



I bought a dress **and** some shoes for the party tonight.



My father **and** brother are both engineers.



My sister called earlier, **and** she told me she's pregnant!



Simon plays video games **and** watches TV every night.



I feel sick, I ate two sandwiches **and** a large slice of cake for lunch.

## 110.2 USING A COMMA INSTEAD OF "AND"

For lists of more than two items, a comma can replace "and."

This comma is replacing "and" in the list.

There's a library, a store, **and** a café.

Another comma is used before the "and."

The "and" is kept between the final two nouns.



### 110.3 "OR"

"Or" is most often used to list two or more choices or alternatives.

Do you want to go to Germany **or** France?

"Or" is used if there is a choice.



"Or" can also be used to talk about the consequences (usually negative) of an action.

Don't be late, **or** you will miss the train.

"Or" is used to show that missing the train is a consequence of being late.



#### FURTHER EXAMPLES



Should we go out **or** should we stay at home instead?



Should we paint the kitchen blue **or** green?



I can't decide whether to get a dog **or** a cat.



Be careful when cooking, **or** you might burn yourself.

### 110.4 "NOR"

"Nor" shows that two or more things are not true or do not happen. After "nor," use a positive form of the verb, and invert the verb as for a question.

I've never eaten lobster, **nor** do I want to.

The subject comes after the verb.



#### FURTHER EXAMPLES



He can't play the guitar, **nor** can he sing.



Fiona didn't turn up to dinner, **nor** did she answer my calls.



My television doesn't work, **nor** does my stereo.

#### TIP

"Nor" is uncommon in informal English.

## 110.5 "BUT"

"But" is used to join a positive statement to a negative statement, or to show a contrast between two clauses.

There's a hotel. There isn't a store.



There's a hotel, **but** there isn't a store.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES



My daughter likes to eat apples, **but** she doesn't like pears.



I wanted to be an architect, **but** I didn't pass my exams.



I went to the supermarket, **but** I forgot my purse.



I'm on a diet, **but** I find it hard to avoid chocolate.



My friend does tap dancing, **but** she doesn't do ballet.



My friends invited me out tonight, **but** I don't feel well enough to go.

## 110.6 "YET"

"Yet" has a similar meaning to "but." It is used when something happens in spite of something else, or when something is true, even though it seems to contradict something else.

It's a warm day, **yet** Raymond's wearing a coat.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

George lives in the countryside, **yet** he works in a nearby city.

There was a school near my house, **yet** I went to one on the other side of town.

I've asked him to be quiet and **yet** he continues to talk during lessons.



## 110.7 "SO"

When "so" is a conjunction, it is used to show that something happens as a consequence of something else.

It was a lovely day, **so** we went for a walk.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES



My house was a mess, **so** I spent the weekend cleaning.



The cathedral is very famous, **so** it attracts a lot of tourists.



I don't like pasta, **so** I rarely go to Italian restaurants.



I work outside, **so** I have to be careful that I don't get sunburned.



Stephen moved to London, **so** he speaks English quite well now.



I ate before I came out, **so** I will only have a coffee.

## 110.8 USING COMMAS WITH COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

If a coordinating conjunction is joining two main clauses, a comma usually goes before the conjunction.

It was raining, **and** there was lightning.



If a coordinating conjunction is joining two items, there is no need for a comma.

I'm going to wear jeans **and** a shirt.



If "and" or "or" is joining three or more items, a comma is usually added between each item and before the conjunction.

I need eggs, flour, **and** milk.



Would you like tea, coffee, **or** juice?



# 111 Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions are used to connect words, phrases, and clauses of unequal importance. They're used to say why, where, or when something happens.

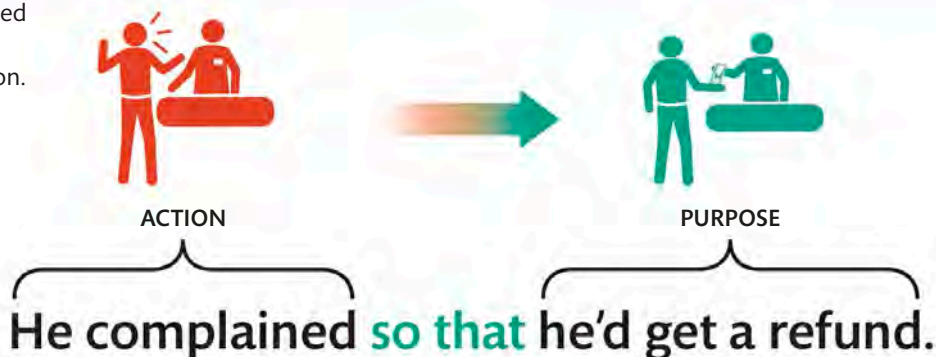
See also:

Present simple **1** Modal verbs **56**

Defining relative clauses **81**

## 111.1 SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS FOR PURPOSE

"So that" can be used to talk about the purpose of an action. It is followed by another clause.



"So that" is often followed by modal verbs such as "can," "could," and "would."

"In order to" has a similar meaning to "so that," but it's followed by a verb in its base form.



## FURTHER EXAMPLES

She went back to the store **in order to** show them her receipt.



The assistant took the receipt **to** process the refund.



In informal speech, "in order" is often dropped.

If the main verb is in the past tense, the verb after "so that" usually refers to the past.

She reported the problem **so that** it could be fixed.



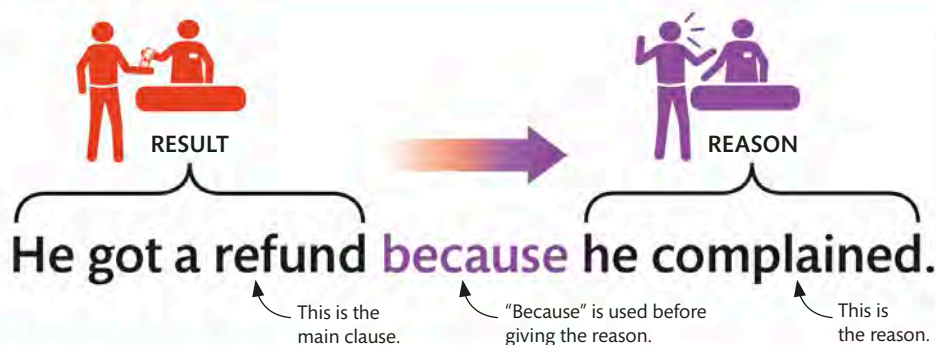
If the main verb is in the present tense, the verb after "so that" usually refers to the present or future.

They check everything **so that** customers don't receive broken items.



## 111.2 CAUSE AND REASON

"Because" is used to talk about why something happens or the reasons behind a decision.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

It's a noisy town **because** there are lots of cars.



My village is quiet **because** there are only a few families here.



I decided to move to the country **because** it's beautiful.



## 111.3 CONTRAST AND CONCESSION

"Although" is used to talk about something that is unexpectedly true.  
"Even though" means the same thing as "although," and it's more common in speech.

{ Although  
Even though }

I got up early, I was late to work.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

**Although** I've done it before, I found the run very difficult.



**Even though** I have two cousins, I've never met them.



I'm going to the beach this weekend, **even though** I can't swim.





## 111.4 "WHEN"

English uses "when" as a conjunction to talk about events or actions in the future that must happen before another event or action can take place. These phrases are called subordinate time clauses and are usually used with the present simple.



## FURTHER EXAMPLES

When I finish my report, I'll call you.



When you get home, will you make dinner?



Subordinate time clauses can also be used to ask about future events.

I'll put up shelves when the paint dries.



When it stops raining, I'll go out.



## ANOTHER WAY TO SAY IT

UK English sometimes uses the present perfect instead of the present simple in subordinate time clauses.



When it has stopped raining, we'll go outside.

We'll go outside when it has stopped raining.

We won't go outside until it has stopped raining.

The present perfect still describes a future event.

## 111.5 "AS SOON AS"

"As soon as" has a similar meaning to "when," but it implies that the second event will take place immediately once the first event is complete.



NOW

**I'll call you as soon as I leave work.**

[I'll call you immediately when I leave work.]

## ! COMMON MISTAKES TENSES AFTER TIME CONJUNCTIONS

Future forms are not used after "when" and "as soon as," even if the clause is referring to the future.

The present simple describes the first event, even though it is a future event.

**When it gets dark, he'll light the fire. ✓**

**When it will get dark, he'll light the fire. ✗**

Even though this refers to the future, it is incorrect to use a future form.

## 111.6 "WHILE"

"While" is used to connect two clauses that are happening at the same time.



**I watered the plants while my husband mowed the lawn.**

## FURTHER EXAMPLES



**I chopped the vegetables while Ted washed the potatoes.**



**I didn't get any sleep while the owl was hooting outside.**



**I read the newspaper while I waited for the kettle to boil.**



# 112 More linking words

Some words can be used to show a relationship between two sentences, or parts of a sentence. This can be cause, effect, emphasis, contrast, or comparison.

See also:

Coordinating conjunctions **110**

Subordinating conjunctions **111**

## 112.1 FORMAL LINKING WORDS

Some linking words are used most often in formal writing and speaking situations.

The castle was built in 1272, **{ whereas  
yet }** the town is modern.

Shows contrast.



His talk was popular and his book was **{ similarly  
equally }** well-liked.

Shows comparison.



Video calls are popular **{ due to  
owing to  
as a result of }** global internet access.

Shows reason.



It's free to visit the museum. **{ Hence  
Therefore }**, it's very popular.

Shows result.



He is known for his research, **{ primarily  
notably }** into royal families.

Shows emphasis.



## 112.2 INFORMAL LINKING WORDS

Some linking words are mostly used in informal writing and speech.

### TIP

Stress can be added to the linking word to emphasize the relationship between words when speaking.



I like listening to music, **but though** my mother hates it.

Shows contrast.



He's a talented swimmer, **like just as** his great-grandfather was.

Shows comparison.



The elderly can get around easily, **because of thanks to** local bus services.

Shows reason.



Staying in touch is easy, **because since as** we all have smartphones.

Shows result.



We grew up together, **so** we tell each other everything. We are very close. **As a result**, we know everything about each other.

Shows effect.



All my siblings are tall, **especially particularly** my older sister.

Shows emphasis.

# 113 Linking words overview

## 113.1 CONJUNCTIONS

### Coordinating conjunctions

join together two words, phrases, or clauses of equal importance.

Coordinating conjunction

I like roses **and** sunflowers.



I like gardening, **but** I hate mowing the lawn.



A comma is used before a conjunction to link two main clauses with different subjects. The comma shows where one main clause ends and another begins.

Subject of first main clause.

Flora tried to water her flowers, **but** the hose burst.

The second main clause has a different subject.

A comma is placed before the conjunction.



## 113.2 USES OF CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions can be used to describe a variety of relationships between two words, phrases, or clauses.



### condition

if  
in case  
unless  
as long as  
so long as  
even if



### time

after  
until  
when  
before  
while  
as soon as

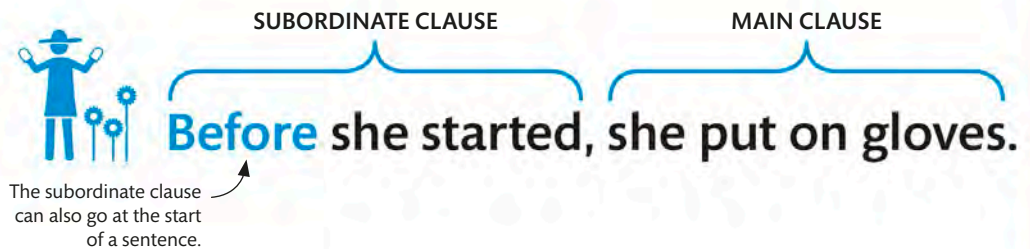
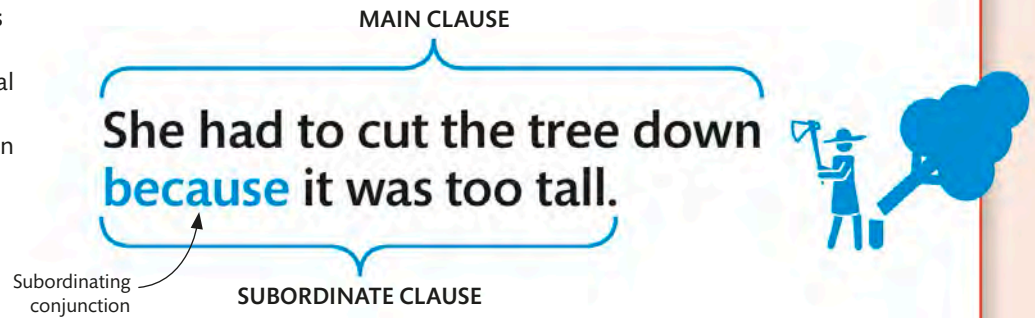


Conjunctions are linking words that describe the relationship between two parts of a sentence. They can be coordinating or subordinating.

See also:  
"Either / neither / both" 68  
Linking words R25

### Subordinating conjunctions

join together two words, phrases, or clauses of unequal importance. A subordinate clause adds more information about the main clause.



### contrast

although  
but  
however  
even though  
whereas  
yet



### cause

as  
because  
since



### reason

in order to  
in order that  
so  
so that  
since